The Bee's Home Magazine Page

THE JUDGE TAKES THE GANG TO THE GAME -:- -:- By Tad -:-

TEACHERS NEED PITY

Immense Responsibilities Are Heaped Upon the Teacher, Which She is Expected to Discharge Without Adequate Means of Support.

By ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

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Of all people in the world, I feel most sympathy for school teachers.

Their position is so important; their influence so vast; their intentions so philanthropic; their usefulness so handicapped by the parents and by the school boards.

Not long ago I read the cry sent forth from a man teacher's heart about the difficulties he encountered in trying to instruct his children in manual training lessons. The pupils were so badly brought up at home, so wilful, so ungracious, so inattentive, that he had to give a large portion of his time to training them in the small matters which should have been learned at home, and the manual methods had to wait in consequence.

Such a teacher is situated like a chef who is asked to prepare a good dinner in a short time, and who received from market, not the expected chickens and vegetables all ready for the grill or kettle, but unplucked fowls and vegetables right from the soil, unwashed and untrimmed.

If his dinner it late by an hour, who is in fault?

Surely not the chef.

Most children are sent to school raw and mentally and morally "unwashed," untrained in the common courtesies of daily life, oftentimes inpertinent and impolite, and lacking all ideas of obedience.

To train these children into attentive and interested students requires much more patience and time and effort than to take them through two school years after they are trained.

There are too many young children sent into the schoolrooms of America. A physician in Boston has stated that more than 1,000 children under 10 years of age wear eyeglasses in that city. He thinks it due to being taught too young to study books. The eyes of children are not intended for such work at that age. Now comes a new idea in schools, and it is to be hoped that it will grow into a generally accepted method of teaching.

In the village of Fairhope, Ala., across the bay from Mobile, is a little school that is often called a reform school—not to reform the children, but to reform the methods of teaching.

There is a kindergarten for children under 7 years of age doing the usual kindergarten work, but no dictation, nor close work, nor "finished" work for exhibition is permitted.

Children from 7 to 13 years of age constitute the life class, where they simply live as happy and wholesome a life as possible.

In the first division of the life class the children under 10 use no books, except as they themselves desire to learn to read. Instead of the formal work of reading and writing and number, the children have music—that is, singing pretty songs, adapted to their year, for the pleasure of singing, not to be able to read music or write music. They often act out or dramatize some song or poem. Many poems are committed by the children, not as a task, but by hearing the teacher recite the same poem a number of times. They have exercises in fundamental conceptions of number daily.

Story telling occupies an important place on the program, in which the children become acquainted with all the best fairy tales, legends, folk lore and myths and great stories of history in the most natural, delightful way, without danger of impairing the eye sight by bending over a book.

Spoken language is cultivated in the story hour. German is also taught by the conversational method. One of the most delightful items of the daily program is the walk.

No definite order is followed, but the direction of the walk is determined by the interest of the day.

Sometimes a neighboring pound is visited to watch the development of the tadpoles into frogs. Sometimes the woods are scoured to discover the elusive pistil of the pines. The identification of trees in winter occupies many walks. In the spring the appearance daily of some new blossom occupies the interest for many days.

Then there is the building of the birds' nests to watch, and all of the interesting bird life to observe.

An outdoor gymnasium affords ample opportunity for acquiring many bodily accomplishments.

One period daily is given to handiwork, and one also to the development of conceptions of color, form, etc. Paper sloyd, cardboard construction, scissors and paste, clay, water colors and pencils are used.

Experience in growing plants is given every child. Plots of ground are laid out in which every child may plant what he chooses and cultivate it in his own way, with the assistance of the teacher and the presence and activity of his fellows to stimulate his perseverence. A well-equipped manual training department affords employment for both boys and girls as soon as they are old enough to use the tools.

The older division of the life class—from 10 to 13 years of age—continue the activities and experiences of the younger group, but they come gradually to books.

This school began with eight pupils. It now has 125.

Such nature schools should be established all over the land, and no little child under 10 years of age should ever be sent into a school where the use of books is imperative. Any child who studies nature under wise teachers until 10 years old and begins then to learn his letters will stand as high as others of his age when the reaches the high school period. And his health and powers of conception will exceed the average. Experiment and see.

OFFICER, HE'S IN AGAIN -:- -:- By Tad

'Tis a Joyful Day

BY TOM POWERS.

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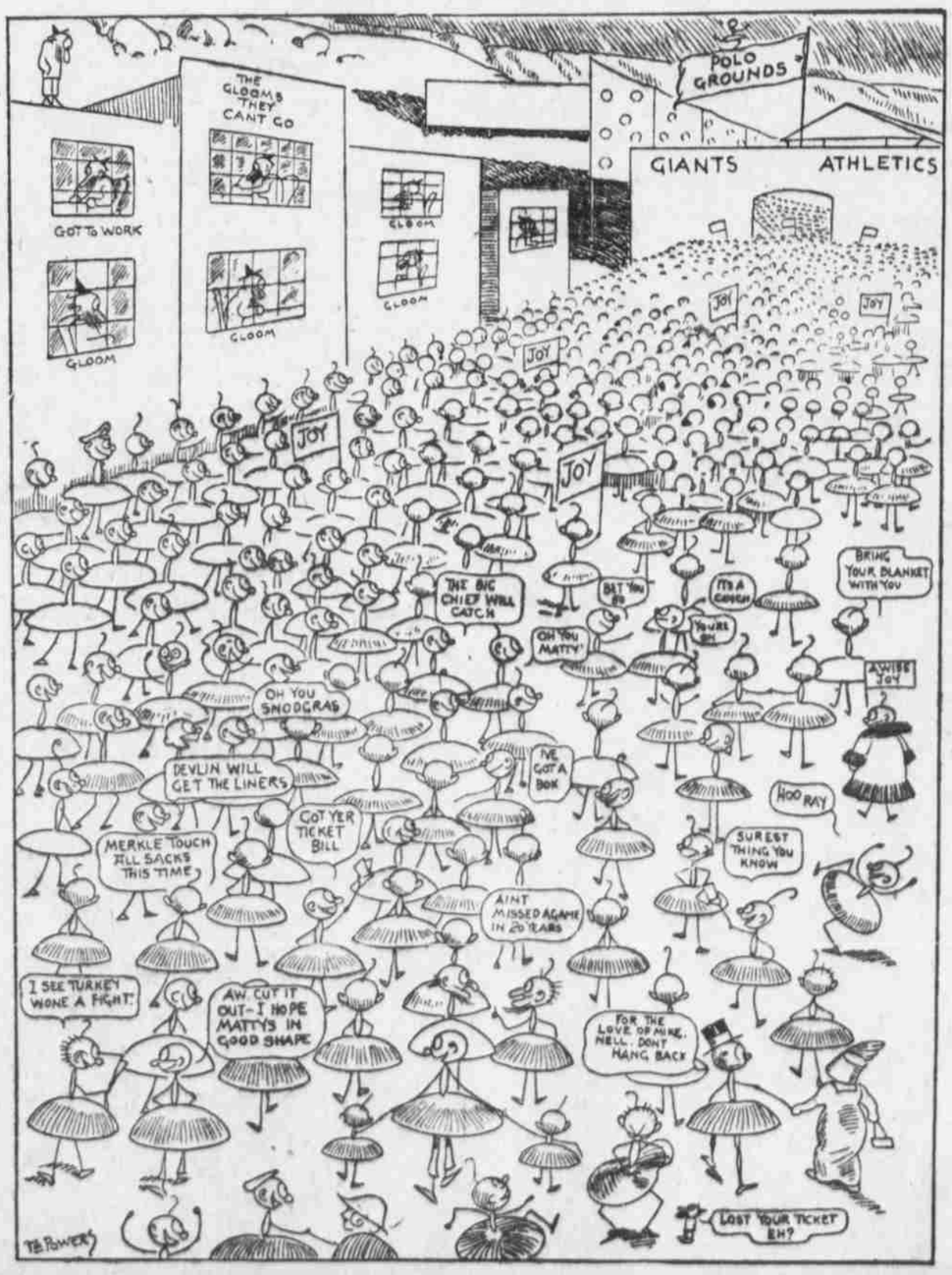

MENTAL LAZINESS

We Are So Lazy, Mentally, We Cannot Hope to Get Anywhere Until We Use at Least as Much Effort in Our Brains as We Wsate Daily in Pleasure.

By FRANCIS L. GARSIDE.

Great, big, wise owls of intellect, sitting in solemn conclave, call the world to look and admire while they put an ordinary person, such as you or me, on a pinpoint and then look at that ordinary person through a microscope while they diagnose his case. They explain his failures, point out the futility of his tiny ambitions, ridicule his little theories of life and prescribe what is essential before he can become the success his Maker designed him to become.

All of which they put down in words so long that the surplus syllables could be tied around the waist and worn as a sash at the back, and then they put the ordinary person back under his little glass case, dismiss the world with a wave of the hand and settle back in their chairs seemingly self-satisfied in the belief that they have solved another big problem and materially helped struggling mankind on its way.

All of which must be very wise and true. But the big syllables tied like a sash in the back are too large for ordinary comprehension, but it is also true that the prescription is too deep and too wise. We know something ails us, and want to be told in words we understand, and here they are: Mental Laziness.

We are lazy in our brains. Ants in every other part of the anatomy and a sluggard in the brain that counts for most of all in our final development.

We think no pains too great to take in curling the hair, or getting a face massage, or selecting a suit at a tailor's, no walk is too long if something to eat or to beautify lies at the end; no effort in earning money is too great if the money is spent on personal adornment or in the preparation of dinner, and though this effort requires great labor, no one thinks it futile. A cake that needs an hour in beating the eggs is the pride of the housewife, and a man will work as hard on something with results of as little permanency, but both the housewife and the man would resent any accusation of laziness, yet neither would devote a half hour, a day to a book that requires concentration of the brain to master.

"It looks too hard," they will say, and throw the books aside for one that looks lighter, but both the man and the housewife will hunt up tasks that require the most arduous untiring of physical labor, and take pride in the achievement. We want our reading matter, our amusements, our entertainments, our relaxations the easiest that the gray matter can digest. We have coddled the contents of our skulls to such an extent that the time is coming when to keep track of the stock market and the number of eggs in a pudding will be regarded as the ultimate in difficult sums.

The great, big owls of wisdom may think they know what ails us, but they have found no disease of sixteen syllables more serious than just this one little complaint told in two simple words, Mental Laziness.

We are so lazy mentally we cannot hope to get anywhere in our ambitions, or to be anything until we use at least as much effort in our brains as we waste every day on passing pleasures.

The Poisoned Man

By WINIFRED BLACK.

I know a man who is dying of poison. He's a young man, comparatively, but his face is turning yellow and his eyes are turning green and his mouth is hard and he can't smile to save his life, poor thing; he's poisoned and he doesn't know it. Poisoned with his own greed, his own envy and his own discontent.

He made some money up in Alaska the other day.

"Hurrah!" we all thought, "he'll come home happy as a clam, and maybe the poison won't work any more."

He came home in adject misery.

His partner had made more than he had, and not all the gold that ever shone looks pretty to that man, if another has a higher pile than he.

He was invited to be one of a distinguished company. "There," we all said, "he'll like that." He came home with his face a gnawing picture of chagrin.

"There was a fellow there that did all the talking; he wouldn't give another soul a chance." "Was he a good talker?" "Well, I guess he was, but I wanted to talk myself."

The man has a son, and the son passed a high examination to go to college. "Good for Jim," we said to the man, "you must be proud of him."

"Well," said the man, "I don't see how John Jones came to pass in the same grade, he isn't half as smart as Jim; there must be something crooked somewhere."

And there was something crooked somewhere, and the somewhere was right in the man's own miserable, unhappy brain.

When he died he won't be satisfied with a good, comfy halo; he'll have to have the best one there is—or he won't play.

Poor, narrow, foolish fellow. Why, the very laborer who digs the ditch for him and his fine orange grove is happier than he is. The very man who holds his saddle horse for him to mount is better off, and no human being of sense would change places with that man for two days not for all the gold that he brought down from Alaska.

He's poisoned—poisoned with envy and with greed and with ungenerous hate, and then he wonders why no one likes him and why all happy laughter stops when he comes around, and why the room that was gay with chatter a moment before is still as death when he brings his bitter face into the range of the firelight.

Poison and poisoning, for I'd as soon live in the house with a skeleton as to sit at the table or to walk or talk with him. His disease is catching. It is infectious; keep away from him or you'll catch it yourself.

The Polo Coat

By CHESTER FIRKINS.

I didn't wail nor mouth nor mope
When She—the siren of my flat,
Queen of my heart and purse and hope,
Pinned a white rabbit on her hat.
(Medusa wore worse things than that
In times artistic and remote).
I shall not leave my habitat
Until she buys a polo coat.

What time, upon a ten-foot rope,
She swung a hand-bag, small and fat,
I whined not, but went out to grope
For coin to buy that lariat.
I never even caused a spat
By jesting on the things she'd tote;
And even now I shall not blat,
Until she buys a polo coat.

Oh, direst thing in Fashion's dope!
Oh, tomb of Beauty—square and flat!
Will I endure you near me?—Nope.
Nor empress nor aristocrat
Could capture me where you are at.
Let Indian belles on blankets dote.
Why should mine hand the weepy chat
Until she buys a polo coat?

Has polo all these fads begat?
A pony coat was last year's note;
And now she's hopeless—having that—
Until she buys a polo coat.

Chunks of Gloom

By MILES OVERHOLT.

Sadness abounds when the yellow leaves
Whirl 'round the corners and down the eaves.
Dark clouds of autumn o'erspread the blue sky,
Chilling winds sob as the winter draws nigh.

When first I wrote a verse like that the family doctor said: "You ought to take a nice long rest and regulate your head. You need a dose of ump-te-ump to jar your system some, or you'll be herding little lambs just north of Kingdom Come."

Sometimes a spell comes over me and I must write a verse that's full of gosh-dinged gloomy stuff with accent on a hearse. And so I write a line or two that makes me want to spill a teaspoonful of scalding tears, and then I have a chill.

Song birds are winging their way to the south;
Chill breaths are flung from old Boreas' mouth.
Dread fills the heart for the sun shines no more
And autumn comes knocking at October's door.

Don't weep with me, just let it drop; I'll handle all the gloom. Forget the past; I'll cry for you; I'm uncle to a tomb. And I'll agree to wrap myself two hours every day with soaking tears and mournful thoughts, while you may romp and play. I'll take the sadness off your hands and spill it all in rhyme, while you and other folk may keep a-smiling all the time.

The Bugs of Fall

By BERTON BRALEY.

The Hunting Bug we next descry
And look upon with wond'ring eye!
In corduroys that do not fit
And with a most bloodthirsty kit,
He starts upon the hunting trail
To fight the fierce and savage quail,
To meet the mallard and the teal,
Grim foeman worthy of his steel.
Through chilly swamps and soaking bogs
Arousing half a million frogs
He makes his way to lie behind
A shelter which he calls a "blind"
And there he waits through all the day
A decent chance to blaze away,
While hail and rain and chilly sleet
Are drenching him from head to feet;
And when the ducks come near the mark
He cannot shoot—because it's dark.
In joyous glee myself I hug
That I am not a Hunting Bug.